



PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough)

What is PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough)?

Pertussis, also called Whooping Cough, is a lung disease caused by bacteria. Pertussis is spread from one person to person. Parapertussis is a milder form of the disease.

How is it spread?

Pertussis is usually spread when the bacteria leaves the nose and throat of an infected person, such as when they cough or sneeze. Well individuals inhale the contaminated droplets and become ill.

Who gets Whooping Cough?

Anyone can get Whooping Cough although it is most common among children. Adults often spread it to children.

How soon after infection do symptoms appear?

A person becomes sick four to 21 days after they contact an infected person. Illness usually begins in seven to 10 days.

What are the signs and symptoms of Whooping Cough?

Whooping Cough begins like a mild cold with a cough. Within a few weeks, the cough becomes severe. There may be coughing spells that end with a high-pitched "whoop." Fever usually is mild. Vomiting may also occur after severe coughing spells.

How long can a person spread Whooping Cough?

An infected person can spread the disease from when symptoms begin to three weeks later. An antibiotic can shorten the duration of the cough.

How do I know if I have Whooping Cough?

Your doctor can examine you to determine if you have Whooping Cough. Laboratory tests may be required.

Is there a vaccine against pertussis?

Yes. The vaccine is usually given at two months, at four months, at six months, again at 15 to 18 months; and at 4 to 6 years of age. However, the vaccine must be given before coming into contact with the Whooping Cough bacteria to stop the infection. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) now recommends a single dose booster to provide protection from pertussis, tetanus and diphtheria in children 10 to 18 years of age.

Is there a way to prevent the spread of this disease?

- Antibiotics can shorten the time period one person can infect another.
- People who live in the household of someone with Whooping Cough should also take antibiotics to protect them from being infected.
- A person with Whooping Cough, or suspected of having it, should be separated from young children and infants until he or she takes an antibiotic for at least five days. If an ill person does not take an antibiotic, they should be separated for three weeks, starting from the time they started getting sick.
- A person under age 7 who lives with a person with Whooping Cough should not go to daycare, school or public gatherings for 14 days. If the person with Whooping Cough and any children in the house all take antibiotics, this time can be shortened to five days.
- Even if vaccinated, some individuals can still get a mild form of Whooping Cough if they are frequently exposed to infected persons.

24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

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